

"What is the difference between an endangered and an extinct animal?" Mrs. Ling asked her science class.

Thomas raised his hand and answered, "Haven't extinct animals died out completely?"

"Yes," she said. "And what about endangered animals?"

"Those animals will die out, too, unless something is done to help them," Thomas replied.

"That is correct, Thomas," said Mrs. Ling. "Scientists have created an Endangered Species List of all animals who need help in order to survive. Who can tell me some of the things that cause animals to become endangered?"

Molly said, "People are the main reason animals become endangered, because we destroy many of the places where animals live."

"Right, Molly. The place an animal lives is called its habitat. If we destroy an animal's habitat, it often dies, because it is difficult for many animals to find new homes. In what ways do people ruin the homes of wild animals?"

"We pollute the air, land, and water with waste and garbage," Philip answered. "We kill lots of fish this way because they can't leave the water."

"Exactly," Mrs. Ling told the class. "Some of our rivers and lakes are so polluted that no animals can survive in their waters."

"We take their homes when we clear more and more land for homes, farms, and buildings," Shelia said.

Mike added, "Careless people destroy their homes by littering and starting forest fires."

Mrs. Ling addressed the class. "These are all good answers. Now, who can name a few other ways in which people jeopardize wildlife?"

"Many animals are in danger because people hunt them for their fur or skin," one of the students remarked.

"I heard that whales are used for dog food. Is that true?" Antonio asked his teacher.

"I'm afraid it is. Many wild animals are killed for such purposes," Mrs. Ling answered.

"When my parents were going to buy our parrot, they looked for a pet store that could prove that the parrot had been raised in captivity," said Jennifer. "They had read that parrots captured from the wild are treated so poorly that only one out of five usually makes it to our country alive."

"That's a good point, Jennifer. Jennifer's parents have made a decision to help save endangered animals," Mrs. Ling explained. "Tell us some ways in which you can help save wild animals. Danny?"

"We could teach our friends to preserve the animals' habitats," he said.

"We should write to the presidents of companies and tell them how their pollution is killing animals," said someone sitting in the back row.

"That is a fantastic idea," replied Mrs. Ling. "Tomorrow we shall write to one of these companies and tell them how they are endangering the lives of animals."

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